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4TH SUPPORT BATTALION, 1ST BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM

HAMBONE EXPRESS

Battalion Commander's Corner Uncasing the Colors!

It has been more than 60 days, 5000+ miles and a lot of hard work, but on 13 Jan 2006 the Packhorse Battalion uncased the colors and assumed the mission to support the 1st Raider Brigade Combat Team in Taji, Iraq. The ceremony represented the symbolic transfer of the logistics support mission from the 125th Forward Support Battalion to the Soldiers and leaders of the 4th Support Battalion. It took the Command Sergeant Major and the Commander a few moments to untangle the battle streamers and the colors have a few wrinkles from the time they were cased, but I am proud to say the colors along with the Packhorse Soldiers now stand proudly in Iraq doing our mission. Every Soldier is working hard and doing great things for the Army, Battalion and their fellow Soldiers. I am very proud of each and every one of them.

I know that earlier versions of the Hambone Express have reached the families and friends of the battalion. I hope you all enjoy the notes and the pictures. We will work hard to let you know what we are doing and get pictures of

your Soldiers in action here in Iraq. Know that I personally appreciate your sacrifices and the support you provide your deployed Soldiers. We certainly could not do what we do without your support. *PACKHORSE SUPPORT!* -
PACKHORSE 6 -



Command Sergeant Major's Corner

Packhorse 7 signing in;

Well another couple of weeks have gone by and all of our Soldiers are doing great. We've had Soldiers receive ARCOMs from the Brigade Commander as well as General's coins from the ADC-S. Our Soldiers are out making things happen not only for the Packhorse Battalion but for the entire 1st Brigade Combat Team; they've truly been doing an outstanding job. I went out on a convoy with our PSD section, which has Soldiers represented from every Company and they looked great. (this is my driver and gunner pictured) they did a great job as well getting me back safe. I've been talking with Soldiers and everyone's spirits are up and have adjusted well to life on Camp Taji. The standards remain high, and morale is up. We are settled into our battle rhythm and will soon be able to start allowing every Soldier to enjoy one day off a week. I'm proud of each and every soldier for their hard work and dedication to mission

accomplishment. The formation thanks all of you back home for all you do everyday in our absence; we truly couldn't do our mission without your love and support. So, until next time, this is:

Packhorse 7 out!





Transfer of Authority Ceremony
13 January 2006





The 4th Support Battalion has finally taken over authority for the missions previously held by the 125th FSB from the 1st Armored Division, Ft. Riley, Kansas. In a brief but moving ceremony, the 4th SB Colors were uncased and the official responsibilities fell upon the Packhorse Battalion.

After more than a month of training, the Packhorse Soldiers, NCOs and officers were more than ready to move forward and start conducting our mission as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom 05-07. From each company, platoon, squad, section, team and individual Soldier, there is a yearning to succeed without fail. There lies a weight of responsibility and duty which is carried with pride, dignity and honor upon the shoulders of each and every one of us.

Those Soldiers who have been to Iraq before speak of the differences between this rotation and the last one. The dangers are still present but present themselves in different forms and opportunities. The challenges of leadership will basically always remain the same. Leaders will still continue to coach, teach, and mentor and junior Soldiers will still seek to be taught and have a thirst to learn and develop. The only thing that doesn't remain a constant is our environment, but the longer we remain here, the less of factor that will be.

Several members of the battalion were recently recognized by Colonel Pasquarette, Commander of the 1st Brigade Combat Team for their selfless service and sacrifices during the recent deployment from Kuwait to Iraq. You couldn't have asked for better weather or a more serene setting given our current environment. In total, eight Soldiers and NCOs were awarded the Army Commendation Medal. The majority of the battalion was able to take a break from our busy schedules and honor our brothers and sisters as they so deserved.

We all look forward to the day that we get to come home but will never lose sight of the mission that we must successfully complete and accomplish here. We are proud of those we had to leave behind as well as those that came forward with us. We are embracing our challenges and the changes that we face on a daily basis. It is without doubt that we will leave this country in a better state than we found it and set the standard for positive change!

Packhorse 1N- SSG Biggins



COL Pasquarette presents SPC Bjunes of ACO with the Army Commendation Medal.



The 1BCT Commander talks to the Packhorse Soldiers about how essential the battalion and it's Soldiers are to the brigade's mission and the overall War on Terrorism.



8 January 2006 marked a historic day for the Provisional Security Detachment (PSD). Today, "Heatseeker" took over the left seat from the "Guardians" of HHC 125th FSB. Their first mission in the left seat of the Transfer of Authority process was to provide security escort throughout Baghdad. 2LT David Hoffman, Heatseeker 16, would lead the first official convoy. I took a few moments of 2LT Hoffman's time to ask how he and his team felt about their first official mission. He stated: "My team and I are excited and ready for the task at hand. We look at it as one of many escort missions we will be called on for during our deployment."

SGT Ortiz and SPC Mora believe that continuous training will keep them sharp and ready to move at a moments notice. The platoon intends to take full advantage of the ranges available on Camp Taji. They also stated that vehicle and weapons maintenance ranks on the same level as employing their weapons systems. Finally, SFC Byrd stated: "dedication to team and skill will help ensure that we are successful on our missions."

HEATSEEKER6- CPT BANKS

HEATSEEKER7- 1SG DICKENS



We're in the driver's seat now!!!



2Lt Hoffman briefs his 3 vehicle commanders (SSG Tolson, SGT Blair and SGT Head) in preparation for the upcoming mission .



Making Taji Home, Sweet Home

What could possibly make crossing into a combat zone appealing? Why on earth would a Soldier be eager to leave the beautiful and exotic paradise known as Camp Buehring, Kuwait, and go to Iraq? As LTC Snow said, "home is where you hang your hat," and most people were excited to find a permanent (for the next 11 months) place not only to set down their soft cap at night, but to rest their head as well. A lumpy, odd smelling, non-spring loaded mattress in a room with only one other person never sounded so good except after weeks of sleeping on a broken-down cot in a massive tent full of Soldiers. Most Soldiers were excited to come to our Camp, if not only to begin to carry out our missions to support 1 BCT, but to get settled into a daily routine.

It is always surprising how much effort it takes to establish normalcy. To ascertain a routine, you must first clean up the mess of the past unit. This applies to everyone in 4th SB. From the lowest level private who has to clean up the several layers of dust, dirt, sand, mud and other unidentifiable objects found in those wall lockers left behind from the previous occupant of the trailer, to the SSA NCO who has to rearrange his section and clean up the mess in the warehouse. Most likely even CSM Martinez had some disorder to mend in his office before he could begin a routine. But surely, nothing is quite like the task set before the Soldiers of the SSA. Most people in A Co were aware that the SSA was conducting a 100 percent inventory, but most Soldiers are probably not aware of what this really means.

In order to take over the SSA from the previous unit, the platoon must take an exact count of EVERY SINGLE part in the warehouse. But first, Soldiers must look at thousands of parts locations and see if they are in the right spot. You would be at first shocked and then thoroughly bored to discover how many different types of bolts there are to count. This is a process that can take several days, and if done incorrectly, will end up costing money and Soldiers' time to correct. And although the deployment budget seems to be ever-expanding, my personal time seems to be depleting before my eyes. But with the help of Soldiers from other platoons from A Co, the mission of supporting the brigade is becoming more and more efficient.

What has been learned since arriving at our Camp?

ANY rule of ANY type can be created during deployment. From wearing eye protection, to not smoking within 50 feet of a building (Does that mean I go outside the gate to smoke?), gradually these standards become habits.

Absolutely DO NOT assume the depth of any puddle. Just because your HMMWV can endure it, doesn't mean your boots can.

The side pockets on the ACU pants really ARE designed for deployment. You can fit 3 Coca-colas and 2 Harvest bars in there and still have room to spare.

Everyone has their ups, everyone has had their downs. People throughout the battalion are scattered doing totally different missions. But throughout it all, every Soldier, NCO, and officer has one thing in common: we have endured a whole month of deployment. One down, eleven to go. That doesn't sound too bad, now does it? So get your routines, settle in, work hard, and watch the months fly by. ANACONDAS!!!

Written by: SPC Jung Ormerod and PFC Carolyn Davis





A Soldier's Point of View on This Special Deployment

By PFC Ifan Ismial-Abraham

Well, as you can tell we were finally in Iraq now. First off, just wanted to say I am proud to be a B Co 4SB MADDAWG soldier. I've been with this unit for a good amount of time now. All I have seen is success. I have also seen leadership come and go, but one thing I always remember is to absorb all the good traits and learn from the bad traits. I've been through times when morale was high and when morale was extremely low, but that's just something you get used to and drive forth with.

When I first got to the unit, I didn't know what to expect. Now I know, and I am extremely confident that I can overcome the hardest of objectives, missions, and duties through positive support from my peers and especially through my chain of command. I am a part of the EMF (Electronic Maintenance Facility) Section. I personally feel that I am a huge computer geek in the Army, but that's a whole different story. I absolutely love the people I work with and the leadership that guides me towards success. I remember all the training exercises and NTC memories that make me appreciate the person/soldier I have become, and the experiences will live with me for a lifetime. I honestly feel that Bravo Company is very disciplined and determined to get the mission complete and come home safely to our loved ones who cherish us more than life itself. What we are doing is the exact definition of patriotism and pride in oneself for his or her beliefs.

The leadership in Bravo Company is most fabulous. I really appreciate my section sergeant, SGT King. He is the prime example of a "Father." Sgt King is someone who teaches you with the fullest knowledge and utmost discipline. He is very intelligent. This person is someone who has taught me more than my guidance counselor back in high school.

I really appreciate my platoon "Mother" sergeant, SSG Robinson. She has fought the fight and stood up for every single Soldier in her platoon to achieve equal opportunity in every situation and most of all, happiness. That is the prime example of a "Mother" who would do anything for her offspring. I really appreciate 1SG Irving and all his unconditional love. He is a prime example of great leadership. He understands the lifestyle and what junior enlisted members of the Army go through day in and day out. Also, he is an entertainer for his famous word "Killa" that gets some of us through our days. Through his excellent guidance, I have been nurtured, molded and sculpted into this great soldier that you see this day. He is extremely fair, very loved, and appreciated by the soldiers that serve under him. I am extremely thankful for all that I have achieved and been exposed to in my army career.

Finally, I want to acknowledge CPT Joseph. The definition of a Captain is someone who is the Chief of all Indians, the head of all honchos, the first to land, the last to leave, the one with the most credentials. At one point in my military career, I had stopped believing in the Army Values because of the corruption I was exposed to and what I have seen with my own eyes, but through CPT Joseph, I have seen all the good and the true seven Army Values. He is a Commander that's been around the world, from Bosnia, and to the desert sands. He is a commander that will go down with his ship. He is a serious morale booster, like as in NOS (Nitrous Oxide) with extremely fast street legal cars. He is a commander I'm honestly proud to serve under. He is the most professional and exciting leader a soldier could want. I now have full confidence in myself, my unit, and the people I serve with.

"This soldier is coming home, coming home forever."





Providing care in many ways!

OUTSIDE THE CAMP WALLS

By: SPC FREELAND



It's bright and early on a cool, but thankfully dry Sunday morning and I'm headed up to the company command post to sign for some heavy duty plates for my protective vest, some extra parts, and the commander's digital camera so that I can take some pictures while I'm out on a mission to help administer medical aid to the local population.

I meet CPT Minica, our Brigade Nurse, at the aid station and we get all of our stuff ready to go and then make the short walk over to the motor pool where we are supposed to meet all of the other units going out on this mission. Everybody has their weapon serial numbers recorded, is assigned to a vehicle, and is given a convoy brief. Finally, we are ready to roll out.

We roll out the camp gates and I see that Taji is really not much different from where I was stationed in Iraq the last time around. The sanitation system still leaves much to be desired, as there is trash and other refuse everywhere you look. Long rows of little shops line both sides of the road and then the country area is up ahead, with its dirt roads and water canals everywhere you look. Not all too long after rolling out our camp gate, we pull up at our final destination, which is an elementary school.

Most of the soldiers on the convoy set up a security perimeter and the rest of us, the medical personnel, busy ourselves setting up our stuff. Our "stuff" is mainly a bunch of medications and vitamins. This setting up doesn't take too long and then we are free to watch two of our trucks out on the road passing out candy, notebooks, stuffed animals, and other items to the local population. Most of these are kids, although there are a few young adults in the noisy crowd vying for goodies.

After all the goodies are passed out, the medical portion of the morning starts. It seems like almost everybody in the local area comes out for this event. One by one, they are allowed to see a doc and are given meds and sent on their way.

At the end, I am left with the feeling that maybe there is more we could do for these people, but with the resources that we have, we do the best we can. It is still important work and even with the little that it seems like we did, we are still making enormous headway in this country.



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

The Sacrifice

As Danny Boy laid his head to rest, he thought long and hard about the man he saw down at the park. Four tall and rough looking boys approached another boy with a brand new football. All of a sudden the four boys started giving the boy with a football a hard time because they wanted it for themselves. After taunting the boy, they were about to hit him when a concerned man came over to stop them. Instead of attacking the boy they went after the man. The boy ran and Danny Boy walked up to the man. "Why did you do that Sir?" The man replied, "Son, I'd do the same for you too if you were in trouble." Just then, the boy noticed some scars on the man's hands. "Sir, where did those scars come from?" Danny Boy asked. "Son, it's a long story but what you have witnessed very few people see. I sacrifice myself for the good of others quite often. Many people are appreciative and many are not. Regardless of how people respond, what matters most is that people remain free from painful events that destroy a person's life. It's my purpose to set people free by the sacrifice I make" said the man. Danny Boy turned to go about playing with his toys but before he did, he asked the man, "Sir, what is your name?" The man said, "My name is Jesus." "My name is Danny Boy. See you later Jesus."

Before falling asleep, Danny Boy said a little prayer in bed. "Jesus, it's me Danny Boy, that was really neat what you did for that boy in the park today. I really miss my mommy and daddy because like you they are making a sacrifice too. Some of my friends' mommies and daddies are making a big sacrifice too. They are in a place called IRAQ. Do you know where that is? Some mommies and daddies are here at home where I saw you today. They are making a sacrifice too. Our mommies and daddies in Iraq and at home are making sacrifices for the good of people and their freedom. I think my nanny said the people are Iraqi's. My nanny says that the cost of freedom isn't cheap and sometimes it takes other people to make a sacrifice. Please look out for all military families and their friends for the sacrifices they make. And when they are in trouble like the boy at the park, will you again sacrifice yourself to keep them safe? I miss them and love them very much. I'll remember to be thankful Jesus, I promise." Amen



The mission never stops....even for sleep!



PFC Almanza finds peace!



1LT Cioffi gets creative!



PFC Nugent stays ready....sort of.



PV2 Spence is deep in his thoughts!



An unidentified Packhorse Soldier stands down for just a bit!



Another unidentified packhorse Soldier stays ready for anything!



CPT Post proves that the ability to talk in one's sleep is truly mission essential!



Soldiers may be reimbursed for protective gear

By Maj. Paul Cucuzzella

January 13, 2006

WASHINGTON (Army News Service, Jan. 13, 2006) -- Soldiers may now file claims and receive reimbursement for protective equipment privately purchased between Sept. 11, 2001, and July 31, 2004.

A provision of the 2005 Defense Authorization Act allows for the reimbursement if service members weren't issued equivalent equipment prior to deployment in Operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom or Iraqi Freedom.

No armor shortage now

There is no need anymore for Soldiers to purchase protective equipment on their own, said Col. Thomas W. Spoehr, director of Materiel for the Army's G8.

"There are no shortages; in fact there is excess in the theater to accommodate lost, damaged or otherwise missing body armor," Spoehr said. "All who need the armor have it, and secondly, Army body armor is the best military body armor in the world. Anything you could procure commercially would not be as capable."

The Army began reimbursing Soldiers Nov. 21 up to \$1,100 for any single item such as protective body armor, combat helmets, ballistic eye protection, hydration systems, summer weight gloves, and knee and elbow pads.

A Soldier may be reimbursed for the purchase of a complete outer tactical vest, or for the separately-purchased components of an OTV, to include Small Arms Protective Insert plates, according to the U.S. Army Claims Service.

Soldiers can also be paid for these items if the items were purchased for them by someone else, such as members of their family.

File DD Form 2902

Current active-duty or reserve-component Soldiers who seek reimbursement should complete and file a DD Form 2902 with the first field grade commander in their current chain of command.

Soldiers must provide proof of deployment (such as deployment orders or a DD Form 214 noting deployment) and copies of all receipts or other proof of purchase for the items claimed, and turn in all reimbursable items to their unit at the time the claim is filed.

If a Soldier is not in possession of some or all of the items, he should submit a written statement explaining why the items are not available, officials said.

Former Soldiers and survivors of deceased Soldiers should complete DD Form 2902 and mail it directly to the U.S. Army Claims Service at the address provided in block 12 of the form. Forms must be accompanied by copies of proof of deployment and proof of purchase, and the items for which reimbursement is sought. Shipping costs for delivering items to the Claims Service are compensable and can be noted on the DD Form 2902.

Forms available on Web

Claimants can download a printable DD Form 2902 at www.jagcnet.army.mil under "Client Services and Links," or call (301) 677-7009 ext. 431 for additional information. All claims must be filed by Oct 3.

Eventually the Army will have enough sets of armor to become a normal issue item, even in the United States. The goal was to have 800,000 sets by the second quarter of 2006.

"The Army has fielded roughly 700,000 sets of Interceptor Body Armor as of today," Spoehr said. "We are meeting all our established goals."

(Editor's note: Maj. Paul Cucuzzella serves with the U.S. Army Claims Service. ARNEWS correspondent John Reese contributed to this article.)

PICTURES!



SFC BYRD (HHC PSD) READS THE INTELLIGENCE UPDATE WHILE PREPARING FOR HIS MISSION TO CAMP ANACONDA.



"THE BULLETS COME OUT GOING REALLY, REALLY FAST!" EXPLAINS ACO'S FIRST SERGEANT FULCHER.



BCO's SSG GAUSE AND SGT GALINDO DIVE INTO THEIR WORK WITH ZEAL AND PACKHORSE ENTHUSIASM!



PFC MULLINS AND SGT HARRIS, BOTH OF C CO, DISPLAY A PRETTY SERIOUS DEFENSIVE POSTURE.